THE DANGER OF THROWING THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT INTO CONGRESS.

SPEECH

OF

DAVID DUDLEY FIELD,

DELIVERED AT

Philadelphia, August 20, 1860.

FELLOW CITIZENS: Four years ago, it was my fortune to address the citizens of Philadelphia upon the issues of the then pending canvass. It was, I thought, easy to foresee some of the results of Mr. Buchanan's election, and the event has justified my predictions. The demands of the slaveholders (let me always distinguish between the slaveholders and the South, for I am far from regarding them as identical) have increased, as it was foreseen they would increase, till they now insist that it shall be received as an undoubted article of constitutional law, that every acre of Federal territory, wherever situated and however acquired, whether from the British Government, from Spain or Mexico, or from the feebler States of Central America, becomes, from the moment of its acquisition, slave soil; and that it is the duty of the Federal Government, with its overwhelming power, to protect, uphold, enforce the dominion of the master over the slave, even against the will of the local authorities and the voice of the surrounding people. It is also demanded, by no inconsiderable portion of the slaveholders, that the prohibition upon the slave trade shall be taken off, that they may supply their plantations with slaves as they supply them with goods from the cheapest market.

The People's party of Pennsylvania was in the last Presidential canvass a compact, powerful party, united upon a great principle, and would then have succeeded but for enormous frauds, of which the recent discovery and proof, in all their extent and wickedness, have alarmed and disgusted the whole country. The bitter tree has borne its peculiar fruit. While we have suffered, our adversaries have not prospered. They placed an Administration in power, of which the least that can be said is, that it has distracted the country and torn its own party in pieces.

Meanwhile, your party here and everywhere in the country has remained united, and increased in strength. Every consideration which influenced it in 1856 must influence it now. The motives to this union and effort have become intensified in the intervening years. It should seem therefore unnecessary, and hardly profitable, to restate to our own members the various considerations of moral principle and public policy which have guided our conduct and stimulated our exertions, and which should continue to guide and stimulate them.

What I should wish rather to do is, to put forth such considerations as might influence others to act with us. Not that I should care to address those who believe in the universality of slavery, and the right and duty of providing a Congressional slave code for the Federal possessions. Men of such opinions are beyond any arguments of mine, and I would not waste words upon them. But I would address myself to those who do not believe either of these revolting dogmas, and particularly to the more conservative portion of them. I desire to show them if I can, and I think I can, that it is most prudent, most conservative, safest, to support the Republican candidates.

Of course, I do not expect to succeed with those who think they find in the characters or principles of our candidates elements dangerous

the country; but I hope to convince every candid person, that if there be no real danger in the event of our success, there is great danger in the opposite direction.

Let us look for a moment at our candidates, both of them. Mr. Lincoln, the candidate for the first office, is a man of the purest character. No one has said, and I assume, therefore, that no one can say, a word against it; but that in all his relations, social and political, and in all his transactions, professional or pecuniary, he is free from all exception, and beyond all reproach. He has lived a laborious life of half a century, often in the midst of great privations and great temptations; he has not sunk under the privation, he has not yielded to the temptation; he has risen, by force of labor and of will, from poverty and obscurity to competence and honorable fame. Refined in his habits, simple in his tastes, unassuming in demeanor, all who know him praise him. I have heard many neighbors and acquaintances, of different parties, speak of him, and I have never heard one who did not speak of him with respect and confidence. He has not been corrupted by office. I believe he has held but one office, that of a member of Congress for a single term. He is fresh from the people. But he is none the less conversant with public questions. His speeches in Illinois, in that most memorable canvass against Mr. Douglas, show him to be a careful observer, a profound thinker, a close reasoner, and a sagacious statesman. I invite his bitterest opponent to look through them, and find one intemperate statement or an extravagant doctrine. They are distinguished throughout by good temper and moderate views. Such a man will administer the Government temperately, however firmly; he will give no provocation, nor run into any kind of extravagance. Every portion of the country will receive its due, so far as depends on him. No State, Southern or Northern, will find cause to complain of him, I am confident. He will treat the South and the North alike, and the East as if it were his own native West.

Our candidate for the second office, Mr. Hamlin, is also a man of irreproachable life and character. He has been much more in public than Mr. Lincoln, and has everywhere borne himself well, proving that every duty will be performed, and that no office is too great for him to fill.

With these men in office, the various interests confided to their care will be safe. They could not be in safer hands. But some of our opponents will say, "we know all this to be true; the men are excellent, but their principles are dangerous." Which of their principles is dangerous? If, instead of invective and vituperation, you will specify any portion of the platform adopted at Chicago, any declaration of Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Hamlin, which from your heart you pronounce dangerous, I will undertake to find a warrant for it in the writings of Washington and Jefferson.

In sober earnest, the Republican party is at this moment the conservative party of the country. All the other parties, or fragments of parties, are advancing some new dogma unknown to the fathers and earlier statesmen, or their candidates are committed to some heresy repugnant to the doctrines of our revolutionary age.

If I could reach the ears of our Southern brethren, and they would listen to me, I would say to them: "Be assured that the Republican party meditates no wrong to you; we would not, if we could, disturb any of your institutions; what you think best for yourselves, it is, in our opinion, your right to have and keep; we consider you neither our inferiors nor our superiors, but our equals; and we desire ever to treat you and to be treated as such. Do not mistake the clamor and extravagance of a few individuals for the judgment or designs of a great party. And, as an humble member of that party, I will venture to predict that the Republican administration will not be selfish or proscriptive; that it will exercise its great powers as a trust for the whole country, and not for a part of it; that in the distribution of offices, and, what is of more consequence, in the recommendation and promotion of public measures, it will not discriminate against the South; and that, at the end of its term, it will receive from all the States the praise of good men for having administered the Government impartially, justly, honorably."

These preliminary observations open the way to an unembarrassed consideration of the duties of conservative men in present circumstances. Mr. Lincoln is the only candidate who can be elected by the people. He will receive the largest number of electoral votes. If he does not receive a majority, no man will receive them. If he be not elected, it will be because a plurality does not elect, but a majority is required. Whoever votes against him, therefore, must act in the hope either that in the House of Representatives a candidate having a less number of electoral votes will be elected, or that the election will fail, through an unsuccessful struggle, lasting from the second Wednesday of February to the fourth of March, and then that the Presidency will devolve on the person whom the Senate shall have selected from the two highest candidates to be Vice President. This will be dangerous, for two reasons:

First. It will violate a rule now generally adopted, that the candidate having the largest number of votes, though less than a majority of the whole, shall be elected. This rule has been rendered necessary, in the progress of our political experience, from the frequency with which several candidates are brought forward, the embarrassment of repeated trials, and the

importance of keeping the offices constantly filled, and when filled, held by the persons who have the confidence of the largest number of electors. All that could ever be said against this practice was, that the officer elected ought to have from the beginning a majority of the people upon his side. No person, so far as I know, has ever thought it other than a grave misfortune that the candidate selected should have received from the people a less number of votes than his competitor, over whom he was preferred. To reject, therefore, Mr. Lincoln, if he should have less than an absolute majority, and put over him one who has less than he, would oppose the general practice, and offend the sense of justice of our people.

Second. If there be danger in the election of one who has not the strongest hold upon the people, there is even greater danger from the struggle in the House of Representatives. We cannot shut our eyes to the constitution of that body, to the lack of self-command which many of its members have already shown, to the passions by which whole classes of them are inflamed, and to the threatening combinations under the influence of which they will be certain in some degree to act.

The worst crisis through which it has ever passed will be as nothing to what we shall see now, if the election of President goes into the House. There are many persons and politicians at the South, threatening and advocating forcible resistance to Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, if elected by the people. If they are sincere, they will resist his election by the Representatives of the people. Among these advocates and threateners of resistance, Southern members of Congress are the loudest, if not the most determined. We may expect, therefore, at least, every sort of intimidation. Threats lead to defiance, and who can tell or dares to think of what may happen on the floor of the House before the 4th of March?

If there be no violence, may there not be corruption? The election will be in the palms of the hands of half a score of members. The yearly revenues of this Government are from eighty to a hundred millions. The disbursement of this money, and the making of the contracts for which it is to be in a great measure disbursed, may be worth millions. I will not trust myself to describe what might occur under such circumstances.

There is a further possible danger. The Constitution declares that the House shall choose the President out of the three highest candidates, and the Senate the Vice President out of the two highest. It is, however, very possible that there may not be *two* or *three* highest. There may be two or three equal in votes. Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin having the highest numbers, the rest may equal each other. Thus, suppose Mr. Lincoln's vote to be 150, and each of the others 51, the Government would be at a dead lock. Neither the Senate nor the House could make a choice. If you tell me that this is a very improbable contingency, I answer, that it is nevertheless possible, and all the more probable from the fact that it is proposed to form mixed electoral tickets in several States, making it not unlikely that the electors of the same State will vote for different candidates. This is not a purely imaginary danger; it was long ago foreseen by some of our most sagacious jurists; and I mention it to show towards what breakers they are causing us to drift, who are aiming to throw the election into Congress.

The machinery for the election of President is in truth the weakest part of our Constitution; the weakest according to the original theory, and made still weaker by the practice under it. The theory of the Constitution was, that the electoral colleges were to be deliberative bodies, exercising their own judgment upon consideration of the fittest person to be President, instead of being, as they now are, merely recording officers, serving no other purpose than to register their votes according to previous instructions. A failure to elect was therefore less probable according to the theory than it has proved to be in practice.

The direction in which the votes are to be cast is now, in fact, determined at the general election in November, while, according to the theory, the whole period between the election and the assembling of the electoral colleges might serve for comparing opinions and purposes, tending to produce an agreement of a majority upon a single person. The inequality of the States was, moreover, much less at the formation of the Constitution than it is now. An election by equal votes—that is, by the States counting each one vote—was not so distasteful to the more powerful States as it has since become. For these reasons, an election by Congress is attended with much more danger than was conceived by the founders of the Government and the earlier statesmen. What they thought of it, I will now proceed to show.

In the Convention which formed the Constitution, Mr. Gerry moved, on the 7th of September, 1787, "that in the election of President by the House of Representatives, no State shall vote by less than three members, and where that number may not be allotted to a State, it shall be made up by its Senators; and a concurrence of a majority of all the States shall be necessary to make such a choice."

Mr. Madison seconded the motion.

Mr. Reed observed that "the States having but one member only in the House of Representatives would be in danger of having no vote at all in the election; the sickness or absence, either of the Representative or one of the Senators, would have that effect."

Mr. Madison replied, that "if one member of the House of Representatives should be left capable of voting for the State, the States having one Representative only would still be subject to that danger." He thought "it an evil that so small a number, at any rate, should be authorized to elect. Corruption would be greatly facilitated by it. The mode itself was liable to this further weighty objection, that the Representatives of a *minority* of the people might reverse the choice of a *majority* of the *States* and of the *people*. He wished some cure for this inconvenience might be provided."

In the Convention of Virginia assembled to decide upon the acceptance or rejection of the Constitution, it was observed by Mr. Grayson: "The Executive is * * * to be elected by a number of electors in the country; but the principle is changed when no one has a majority of the whole number of electors appointed, or when more than one have such a majority, and have an equal number of votes; for then the lower House is to vote by States. It is thus changing throughout the whole. It seems rather founded on accident than on any principle of government I ever heard of. * * * The number of electors is equal to the number of Representatives and Senators, viz: ninety-one. They are to vote for two persons. They give, therefore, one hundred and eighty-two votes. Let there be forty-five votes for four different candidates, and two for the President. He is one of the five highest, if he have but two votes, which he may easily purchase. In this case, by the third clause of the first section of the second article, the election is to be by the Representatives according to the States. Let New Hampshire be for him; a majority of its three

Representatives is	–	2
Rhode Island	1	1
Connecticut	5	3
New Jersey	4	3
Delaware	1	1
Georgia	3	2
North Carolina	5	3
A majority of seven States is		15

"Thus the majority of seven States is fifteen, while the minority amounts to fifty. The total number of voices, ninety-one electors and sixty five Representatives, is one hundred and fifty-six. Voices in favor of the President are two electors and fifteen Representatives, which are in all seventeen. So that the President may be re-elected by the voices of seventeen against one hundred and thirty-nine. It may be said that this is an extraordinary case, and will never happen. In my opinion, it will often happen."

Mr. George Mason contended that "the mode of election was a mere deception, a mere *ignis fatuus* on the American people, and thrown out to make them believe that they were to choose him, whereas it would not be once out of fifty that he would be chosen by them in the first instance, because a majority of the whole number of votes was required. If the localities of the States were considered, and the probable diversity of the opinions of the people attended to, he thought that it would be found that so many persons would be voted for, that there seldom or ever could be a majority in favor of one, except one great name, who, he thought, would be unanimously elected."

St. George Tucker, Professor of Law in the University of Virginia, and Judge of the General Court of that State, in the beginning of this century, after commending the mode of election by electoral colleges as tending to avoid turbulence, makes an exception, "where the election may devolve upon the House of Representatives. Then, indeed, (he continues,) intrigue and cabal may have their full scope; then may the existence of the Union be put in extreme hazard; then might a bold and desperate party, having command of an armed force and of all the resources of Government, attempt to establish themselves permanently in power, without the future aid of forms or the control of elections. Upon what principle, we may ask, is it that State influence is in this case permitted to operate in an inverse proportion to the ratio of population, and thus predominate over it? Upon what principle is it that that ratio which gives to all the citizens of the United States an equal voice in the election of President, in the first instance, shall give to the Representative of the citizens of Delaware, in the second, a weight equal to nineteen Representatives of the citizens of Virginia? Why then should the House of Representatives vote by States on this great occasion? It is perhaps susceptible of proof, that if the arts of corruption should ever be practiced with success in the election of a President, it will arise from this circumstance—the votes of a few individuals, in this instance, more than counterbalancing four times their number."

Such were the fears of our fathers. Time and experience have added to their force. The House of Representatives has already become a turbulent body, beyond anything dreamed of in the beginning of the Government. Intemperance in language is habitual, personal violence even has been practiced, without receiving any punishment. Many of the members, we are told, carry concealed arms. They threaten and abuse each other as if they had been collected together from the lowest classes of society. Into this body, thus constituted, and thus acting, it is proposed to cast the election of Chief Magistrate of thirty millions of people, divided into three or four parties inflamed against each other, and struggling for

the gift of innumerable offices, and the yearly disbursement of an hundred millions.

If this appear to us an enormous risk, judging from the character of the body and the interests at its disposal, much greater does it appear when we remember how this body has deported itself in past trials. There have been already two elections of President by the House—one of them in 1801, and the other in 1825. On the first occasion, Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr had an equal number of votes, (there being then no distinction on the ballots between the two offices,) and the election therefore devolved upon the House. The contest convulsed the country, and produced an amendment of the Constitution.

Some of the scenes, as they appear in the histories and correspondence of the time, it may be useful now to recall.

About the middle of December, 1800, the leaders of the Republican and Federal parties knew the result in the electoral colleges. Both sides were disappointed.

Mr. Jefferson had - - - -	73 votes.
Mr. Burr had - - - -	73 "
Mr. Adams had - - - -	65 "
Mr. Pinckney had - - - -	64 "
Mr. Jay had - - - -	1 "

The Senate and House were to meet (by law) on the 11th of February, 1801, to count the votes. Before meeting the Senate, the House adopted "eight rules to be observed in the choice of a President," with the intent, as Mr. Randolph said, (as a Federal expedient,) to starve or worry the doubtful members into voting for Burr.

The first rule provided, that in case no candidate should have a majority of the electoral votes, the House would forthwith return to their own chamber, and immediately proceed to a ballot; "and in case, upon the first ballot, there 'shall not appear to be a majority of the States 'in favor of one of them, in such case the 'House shall continue to ballot for a President, 'without interruption by other business, until it 'shall appear that a President is duly chosen."

Fourth. "After commencing the balloting 'for President, the House shall not adjourn until 'a choice be made."

Fifth. "The doors of the House shall be 'closed during the balloting, except against 'the officers of the House."

On the 11th of February the Senate and House of Representatives met, and the electoral votes were counted.

There being no choice, the two Houses then separated, and the House of Representatives proceeded to ballot in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, and under the rules they had adopted.

On the first ballot, eight States voted for Jefferson, six were for Burr, and two were divided.

The eight States which voted for Jefferson included all those south of New England except Maryland, Delaware, and South Carolina. The four maritime Northeastern States, with Delaware and South Carolina, voted for Burr. Vermont and Maryland were divided.

Two or three members were so ill as to be brought to the House on their beds. One, who was extremely ill, was attended in the House by his wife.

Twenty-eight ballots were had, at longer or shorter intervals, occupying the House till the next day, at noon.

The House remained in session nominally, without adjournment, for seven days; but after sitting out the first night, the resolution not to adjourn was substantially evaded by substituting a recess. During the next four days the actual sessions were very short, only five ballotings being had.

On the 13th of February the 29th ballot was had, and on the 14th the 30th, 31st, 32d, and 33d ballots, and on the 16th the 34th ballot.

"Ample time," (I am now quoting from Hildreth's History,) "had been allowed to Mr. 'Burr to bring over, if he could, any of the 'opposition votes; and that offers on both 'sides had been made to the doubtful members, subsequent developments left little doubt.

"A part of the evils which Hamilton had 'anticipated begun already to be felt. The 'public mind was much agitated by the delay. 'Rumors had been and continued to be circulated, charging the Federalists with the most 'desperate and revolutionary intentions. Jefferson himself, in the highest state of nervous 'agitation, wrote to Monroe that nothing but 'threats on the part of the opposition that the 'Middle States would rise in arms, and call a 'Convention for framing a new Constitution, 'prevented the Federalists from passing an 'act to vest the Executive authority, in default 'of any election of President, in the Chief Justice, or some other high officer."

"Had Congress been sitting in Philadelphia, 'instead of in Washington, it would have run 'no small risk of being invaded by a mob."

On the 16th of February, "thinking that 'the time had arrived for terminating the 'struggle in the exercise of a discretion intrusted to him by the other three Federalists 'with whom he co-operated, Bayard, of Delaware, called a general meeting of the Federal 'members, and though some were still very 'reluctant to yield, it was finally agreed that 'Burr had no chance, and that Jefferson must 'be chosen."

The 35th ballot, taken at noon on the 17th, resulted like the former. After an hour's interval on the seventh day of the protracted sitting, the 36th ballot was had. Mr. Morris, of Vermont, was absent, and the two Maryland Federalists, Craik and Baer, put in blank ballots—thus giving two more States to Jefferson, which made a majority, and he was chosen.

The letters and diaries of the leading men

of that time show how deeply the public mind was agitated.

The contest in reality lasted sixty days—from the middle of December, 1800, to February 17, 1801. During the greater part of that time, Hamilton was in New York, Jefferson at Washington, and Burr at Albany, a member of the Legislature.

On the 19th of December, Mr. Jefferson wrote to Mr. Madison in regard to the alleged threats of the Federalists, "that they openly 'declare they will prevent an eleciton, and will 'name a President of the Senate *pro tem.*, by 'what they say would only be a stretch of the 'Constitution."

On the same day, Gouverneur Morris, writing to Hamilton, observed: "It is supposed 'that Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr will have 'equal votes, and various speculations are 'made and making on that subject. At first 'it was proposed to prevent any election, and 'thereby throw the Government into the hands 'of a President of the Senate. It even went 'so far as to cast about for the person. This 'appeared to me a wild measure, and I endeavored to dissuade those gentlemen from it, 'who mentioned it to me. It seems now to be 'given up. The object with many is to take 'Mr. Burr, and I should not be surprised if 'that measure were adopted. Not meaning to 'enter into intrigues, I have merely expressed 'the opinion, that since it was evidently the 'intention of our fellow citizens to make Mr. 'Jefferson their President, it seems proper to 'fulfil that intention.

"The answer is simple, and on mere reasoning conclusive, but it is not conclusive to unimpassioned sentiment. Let the Representatives do what they may, they will not want 'arguments to justify them; and the situation 'of our country (doomed perhaps to sustain, '*unsupported*, a war against France or England) seems indeed to call for a *vigorous* '*practical* man. Mr. Burr will, it is said, come 'hither, and some who pretend to know his 'views think he will *bargain* with the Federalists. Of such *bargain* I shall know nothing, 'and, having declared my determination to 'support the constitutionally-appointed administration so long as its acts shall not in my 'judgment be essentially wrong, my personal 'line of conduct gives me no difficulty; but I 'am not without serious apprehension for the 'future state of things."

Hamilton was incessant in his efforts. He corresponded with Gouverneur Morris, Bayard, and others, almost daily.

Bayard held the vote of Delaware in his hand; and on January 7th wrote thus to Hamilton:

"With respect to the personal quality of the 'competitors, I should fear as much from the 'sincerity of Mr. Jefferson (if he is sincere) as 'from the want of probity in Mr. Burr. There 'would be really cause to fear that the Government would not survive the course of moral 'and political experiment to which it would be 'subjected in the hand of Mr. Jefferson."

On the 15th of February, Mr. Jefferson wrote to Mr. Monroe, two days before a choice was made, as follows:

"If the Federalists could have been permitted 'to pass a law for putting the Government in 'the hands of an officer, they would certainly 'have prevented an election. But we thought 'it best to declare, one and all, openly and 'firmly, that the day such an act passed, the 'Middle States would arm, and that no such 'usurpation, even for a single day, should be 'submitted to. This first shook them," &c.

Hamilton's feelings during the struggle were wrought to such a pitch, that he declared in a letter to Mr. Bayard, after the contest:

"It is believed to be an alarming fact that, 'while the question of the Presidential election 'was pending in the House of Representatives, 'parties were organizing in several of the cities, 'in the event of there being no election, to cut 'off the leading Federalists and seize the Government."

This was the first time the election of President was thrown into Congress. Let us go on to the record,

In 1824, General Jackson, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Crawford, were the candidates; and though the first had the largest number, he had not a majority of the electoral votes. The House proceeded to choose one of the three, and chose Mr. Adams on the first day. Crimination and recrimination followed. Loud complaints were made that the candidate having the lesser number should be chosen, and a violent political struggle was the result. Mr. Benton gives the following account of this struggle in his Thirty Years' View:

"The second Presidential election in the House of Representatives was after the lapse 'of a quarter of a century, and under the 'amended Constitution, which carried the 'three highest on the list to the House when 'no one had a majority of the electoral votes. 'General Jackson, Mr. John Quincy Adams, 'and Mr. William H. Crawford, were the three, 'their respective votes being 99, 84, 41; and 'in this case a second struggle took place 'between the theory of the Constitution and 'the democratic principle; and with eventual 'defeat to the opposers of that principle, though 'temporarily successful. Mr. Adams was elected, though General Jackson was the choice 'of the people, having received the greatest 'number of votes, and being undoubtedly the 'second choice of several States whose votes 'had been given to Mr. Crawford and Mr. Clay '(at the general election.) The Representatives from some of these States gave the vote 'of the State to Mr. Adams, upon the argument that he was best qualified for the sta-

'tion, and that it was dangerous to our institutions to elect a military chieftain—an argument which assumed a guardianship over the people, and implied the necessity of a superior intelligence to guide them for their own good. The election of Mr. Adams was perfectly constitutional, and, as such, fully submitted to by the people; but it was also a violation of the *demos krateo* principle, and that violation was signally rebuked. All the Representatives who voted against the will of their constituents, lost their favor, and disappeared from public life. The representation in the House of Representatives was largely changed at the first general election, and presented a full opposition to the new President. Mr. Adams himself was injured by it, and at the ensuing Presidential election was beaten by General Jackson more than two to one—178 to 83. Mr. Clay, who took the lead in the House for Mr. Adams, and afterwards took upon himself the mission of reconciling the people to his election in a series of public speeches, was himself crippled in the effort, lost his place in the Democratic party, joined the Whigs, (then called National Republicans,) and has since presented the disheartening spectacle of a former great leader figuring at the head of his ancient foes in all their defeats, and lingering on their rear in their victories. * * * Finally, it was a caution to all public men against future attempts to govern Presidential elections in the 'House of Representatives."

Such has been the experience of the House in the only instances in which it has been called upon to make choice of a President. Those were, however, its earlier and better days. A great change has come over the body, in the six-and-thirty years which have passed since the latter of those occurrences. It then consisted of one hundred and eighty members. It has now two hundred and thirty-seven. No longer filled with the ablest and most considerate men of the nation, it has degenerated in self-control as much as it has fallen off in ability. Twice within the last six years it has found the greatest difficulty in electing its own Speaker. From the first Monday of December, 1855, to the second day of the following February, it remained without a head. A similar interval of disorder, only one day less in duration, occurred at the beginning of the present session. On the first occasion, one hundred and thirty-three ballotings were had, before a choice was made; on the second, forty-four.

He must be a careless observer of what is passing in his own age, as well as an idle student of the history of past ages, who can think it safe to cast such a prize as the Presidency into such an arena, to be contended for during many days, and lost and won, according to the chances of intrigue, intimidation, endurance, and possible corruption and violence.

In the whole history of the world, you cannot find the election of the chief magistrate of a great people by a single body ever proving wise or safe. Neither in Rome nor in Venice, or Poland, was it other than a source of corruption, intrigue, violence, and misrule, leading to civil commotions and the final ruin of the State.

All this one might be willing to encounter, if it were necessary, in order to prevent a certain and greater evil, or to compass a certain good; but as no man can foretell which of the eight candidates will come uppermost in the scramble, the good is at the best most doubtful, and the supposed evil is the election of one of the purest, most thoughtful, and disinterested men of our time.

To you then, gentlemen of all parties, or of no party, who take no further interest in politics than to seek the promotion of order, fraternal sentiment, moderate counsels, and honest government, I beg leave to address myself. While I believe that of all the candidates Mr. Lincoln is the safest, as I believe that he will be elected, and of all the parties that the Republican is the truest to the principles and the history of our country, I will suppose that you are of a different opinion, and that if you could exercise an unrestrained choice you would prefer another candidate and another party. But your choice in the present instance is restricted. *You must choose between Mr. Lincoln and the dangers and chances of a struggle in Congress, with its uncertain issues.*

All opposition to our candidate centres at last in this: to prevent his election by the people, not that the people may elect another, but that some one who has less of popular strength may be placed above him; that this may be done by a juggle of thirty-three votes cast in a noisy, turbulent, and wildly-excited body, where one man from Oregon shall have the same power as thirty-three from New York. It might or it might not happen that a respectable choice would be made; that is uncertain; but it is certain that *the process is not safe.*